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EDITORIAL NOTES

High-school teachers are disposed to hold themselves aloof from the effort which is now being made to develop a general body of principles of education. The teachers of the lower grades are very much occupied with such questions as the parallelism between racial evolution and individual development, or the importance of the formal steps as means of organizing the materials of instruction. The high-school teacher, on the other hand, absents himself from teachers' meetings and with fine scorn characterizes these discussions on the part of teachers in the lower grades as useless theory.

HIGH-SCHOOL
TEACHERS AND
EDUCATIONAL
THEORY

All this is easily understood when it is remembered that the high school has, until very recently, had its work worked out for it by well-established tradition and by the demands of the colleges. Furthermore, the high school has been an exclusive institution attended by the few, and consequently problems of economy of effort have never become so acute as they are in the lower schools. The higher the educational institution the greater the waste which will be tolerated without question.

Another reason for the lack of interest in educational discussion on the part of high-school teachers is doubtless to be found in the fact that most of the scientific results which have thus far been obtained relate to the simpler problems of mental development. The infant has been described frequently in books on children, while little corresponding work has been done on school children. With the exception of President Hall's volumes on *Adolescence* and *Youth*, the literature of education strikes below the high-school age, and there is so much mythology in Dr. Hall's books that one can hardly wonder at the reluctance of high-school teachers to read or follow their teachings.

There are unmistakable signs, however, that a change is at hand. The high school is breaking away from the leadings of the college. The demands for better methods of organization and teaching are making themselves felt. Traditions are weakening and the general scientific spirit of the age which leads men in all occupations to examine their practices critically is asserting itself even in our higher schools. There are those who dare to call into question the long-accepted notions of discipline. The first year of high school which drives away so many students with its barren programme of ancient history, Latin, and algebra is on the defensive. All this means that somewhere and somehow the pressure is being exerted to drive the high-school teacher to a careful consideration of his task.

NEW MOTIVES
FOR THE
STUDY OF
EDUCATION

At such a juncture as this very much depends upon the way in which the programme for future work is presented. Let us arouse none of the old antipathies by suggesting the study of psychology or child-study, but let us insist that every high-school teacher be called upon to give a good reason for his or her mode of instruction. Let us ask for a classification of the students with reference to their differences in mental characteristics. The teacher who seeks to give definite answers to such questions as these will find that there is something more in teaching than a mere knowledge of a subject. The subject-matter must be arranged so as to appeal to students. The student must be considered as a part of the problem. The great difficulty up to this time is that the problem of the scientific study of education has not been attacked directly enough. Teachers have been referred to books on this, that, and the other related science. Let us now set up a standard of our own and say that we will study the problem by all means at hand and master it directly. There is no use waiting for the psychologists or the sociologists or anyone else. The problem of education must be taken up as a problem worthy of the best scientific talent.

Let a faculty take as its problem the thorough examination of the five poorest students in the school. What are their traits of character and mind? What is the most obvious defect in their training? What steps can be tried to improve them? How can a record be kept which will show the effects of the treatment? This is a scientific programme which is clear enough to command respect and large enough to engage the best energies of a highly trained high-school faculty.

There will be another effect of the adoption of such a programme. Better trained men and women will be attracted into the high schools for they will find in the scientific study of these problems a sphere for the exercise of genuine productive intelligence. The high school today is too often looked upon as a second-rate intellectual sphere. Well-trained teachers wish to get out of the high school into the higher institutions where they can carry on research. The high school needs the best scientific talent that can be had. Everything is being worked out scientifically today. Banking, agriculture, advertising, engineering are attractive to well-trained minds because they present problems. The high-school teacher who drones over the same text year after year and sees no problem in his work ought to be rated as a second- or third-class mind. That teacher who sees the high-school problem and takes it up and promotes its solution will justify his profession as one of the most absorbing and as entirely worthy of any training that our highest institutions can devise.

C. H. J.

**CERTAIN
SCIENTIFIC
PROBLEMS**

**EFFECT
ON
TEACHERS**